

IN THE CLAIMS:

1. (cancelled)

2. (cancelled)

3. (cancelled)

4. (cancelled)

5. (currently amended) A toothbrush comprising

a structurally stiffened, elongated handle;

a block head attached to the handle;

a brush attached to the block head;

a case attachable to the block head and sealingly enclosing the brush.

6. (original) The toothbrush according to claim 5 further comprising
toothpaste disposed at a bottom of the case.

7. (currently amended) The toothbrush according to claim 5 further comprising

a hinge connecting an outer end of the block head to a narrow rim of the case , wherein the hinge is separated into block head and case prior to brushing the teeth.

8. (currently amended) The toothbrush according to claim 5 further comprising

[[a]] an elongated channel forming the handle.

9. (original) The toothbrush according to claim 8 further comprising braces disposed inside the channel and disposed perpendicular to a longitudinal direction of the channel for increasing the stiffness of the channel.

10. (original) The toothbrush according to claim 8 further comprising a rib connecting the handle to the block head, wherein the rib extends substantially in a plane spanned by a longitudinal direction of the channel and a direction perpendicular to a floor of the channel and attached to the bottom of the channel and to a back of the block head.

11. (original) The toothbrush according to claim 10 wherein the width of the rib decreases from an end on the side of the channel to an end on the side of the block head.

12. (currently amended) ~~[[The]] A toothbrush according to claim 10~~
comprising

a channel forming a handle;

a block head attached to the handle;

a brush¹ attached to the block head;

a case attachable to the block head and sealingly enclosing the brush;

a rib connecting the handle to the block head, wherein the rib extends substantially in a plane spanned by a longitudinal direction of the channel and a direction perpendicular to a floor of the channel and attached to the bottom of the channel and to a back of the block head;

wherein side walls of the channel are sloped downward beginning in an area of ~~[[a]]~~ the rib and ending near an inner end of the block head.

13. (currently amended) ~~[[The]] A toothbrush according to claim 10~~
~~further~~ comprising

a channel forming a handle;

a block head attached to the handle;

a brush attached to the block head;

a case attachable to the block head and sealingly enclosing the brush;

a rib connecting the handle to the block head, wherein the rib extends substantially in a plane spanned by a longitudinal direction of the channel and a direction perpendicular to a floor of the channel and attached to the bottom of the channel and to a back of the block head;

a second rib disposed neighboring to the first rib, wherein a distance between the first rib and the second rib decreases from a value of from about 0.3 to 0.7 of an inner width of the channel in the area of the channel to a value of less than 0.1 of the inner width of the channel.

14. (original) The toothbrush according to claim 5 further comprising a plate disposed at and attached to the block head, wherein bristles of the brush protrude from the plate.